

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, and 17-22 are presented for examination. Claims 17 and 18 have been amended to correct dependencies. Claims 4-7, 11-14, 16, and 23-26 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 1 and 8 are in independent form. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication that Claims 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, and 29-22 have been allowed, and that Claims 17 and 18 would be allowable if rewritten so as not to depend from a rejected claim, and with no change in scope. Since Claims 17 and 18 have been so rewritten, Claims 17 and 18 are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 4-7, 11-14, 17, 18, and 23-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), as being obvious from U.S. Patent 6,104,826 to *Nakagawa* in view of U.S. Patent 6,693,965 to *Inoue* and U.S. Patent No. 6,360,000 to *Collier*; and Claim 16, as being obvious from *Nakagawa* and *Collier* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,293,590 to *Keener*.

Cancellation of Claims 4-7, 11-14, 16-18, and 23-26 render their rejections moot.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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